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Urbanization, Islamization, and Identity Crisis: The Role of Pashtun Women's Mourning in the Construction and Maintenance of Identity

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Urbanization, Islamization, and Identity Crisis: The Role of Pashtun Women's Mourning in the Construction and Maintenance of Identity

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Abstract

Urbanization, Islamization, and Identity Crisis: The Role of Pashtun Women's Mourning in the Construction and Maintenance of Identity

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Despite prohibitions attributed to the Prophet Muhammad strictly forbidding the practice of dramatic acts of public mourning, Muslim women have persisted in wailing performances throughout history and across boarders. Pashtun social ethics require women to participate in visitation exchanges commemorating sorrowful and joyous events experienced by members of their social circle known as *gham-xadi* exchanges. These exchanges, which involve performative mourning rites, affirm a woman's place in society through the maintenance of complex social networks. This research examines the role ritualized mourning performances play in the construction and maintenance of ethnic and religious identities among Pashtun women living in Pakistan. It explores the opposing pressures of Islamic prescription and Pashtun traditions regarding funerary rites and women's mourning, arguing that social changes taking place in recent decades have caused these pressures to come into increasing conflict with one another. While

urbanization and the shift from an agrarian to an industrial based economy in Pakistan has led to the amplified importance of wailing performances, globalization and growing exposure to the West has revitalized anxieties surrounding proper religious practices. The process of Islamization occurring through constitutional and educational reforms in Pakistan compounds this anxiety. These tensions have created an identity crisis among Pashtun women in Pakistan who are then forced to reconcile these disparate demands resulting in the layering of their identities.

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Introduction

In the past, scholars have tended to focus on the *Ummah*, or Islamic community, as the paramount group membership in the lives of all Muslims around the world. One mid-century scholar wrote, "Islam knows of one community only, the community of the faith, *Ummah*."[1] However, this approach essentializes the Muslim experience. Believers of all faiths have numerous and layered identities that interact and are negotiated to various degrees in accordance with their own cultural background.

This research examines such interactions through the exploration of ethnic and religious identities taking as its case study Pashtun communities. Pashtuns make up one of the largest tribal groups in the world. While they make up the majority of Afghanistan's population, this research is mainly concerned with the Pashtun minority living in northern Pakistan. It will examine the tensions between Islamic prescription and Pashtun traditions regarding funerary rites, women's mourning and their role in the construction and maintenance of these identities in a changing political and economic landscape. While this research focuses on the case of Pashtun women living in Pakistan, the issue of women's wailing in Muslim society has been addressed in a number of communities.

Despite prohibitions against performative acts of mourning and wailing attributed to the Prophet, women throughout the Islamicate world have continued to participate in

[1] C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze, "The Ummah: An Analytical Approach," *Studia Islamica 10*, (1959): 5.

such acts. Lila Abu-Lughod has documented Bedouin women's wailing in Egypt. [2] Abu-Lughod describes the ritualized acts of mourning she encountered while living with the Awlad Ali Bedouin community. She sees the poems composed on the occasions of loss as articulations of sentiments not ordinarily permitted by the society's honor code. Further, she discusses the role of women's lamenting in the affirmation of kinship ties and community. In the Egyptian Bedouin example, those in the community readily acknowledge the tension between lamentation and Islamic piety.

In her discussion of the effects of the world economy on community-based social orders, Victoria Bernal reveals similar tensions occurring among Muslim communities in the Sudan.[3] She describes a funeral wherein women are wailing, shrieking, pulling their hair and covering themselves with dirt. Bernal sees this behavior as culturally patterned and endorsed. Like Abu-Lughod, she acknowledges the tension with Islamic tradition, noting that, in a display of their own piety, male mourners physically prevent women from engaging in this activity.

James Wilce also sees the tensions between Islamic orthodoxy and traditional lament, this time playing out in Bangladesh.[4] He describes stylized poetic wailing performed by women, and occasionally men. The author notes that people are quick to reproach lamenters as crazy, ignorant, foolish or backwards. He examines the decline of

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[2] Lila Abu-Lughod, "Islam and the Gendered Discourses of Death" *International Journal of Middle East Studies 25* (1993) 187-205 and "Honor and Sentiments of Loss in a Bedouin Society" *American Ethnologist 12* No. 2 (1985): 245-261.

[3] Victoria Bernal, "Gender, Culture, and Capitalism: Women and the Remaking of Islamic 'Tradition' in a Sudanese Village," *Comparative Studies in Society and History 36*, No. 1 (1994): 36-67.

[4] James Wilce, "Genres of Memory and the Memory of Genres: 'Forgetting' Lament in Bangladesh" *Comparative Studies in Society and History 44*, No. 1 (2002): 159-185.

traditional laments in the region and ties this to the postcolonial experience and the rise of modernizing and Islamizing forces.

This research looks at Pashtun women's mourning rituals in hopes of better understanding the role lament plays in the identity formation of all Muslim women. Before this task can be accomplished, it is necessary to first understand the nature of identity and the role ritual plays in its construction and maintenance. It is also paramount that we understand the function of ritual in processes of social change.

DEFINING IDENTITY

It is necessary to first define what is meant by "identity" whether social, religious or ethnic. Identity, as an individual's self-conception in relation to their surroundings, has many components. Identity is not a fixed concept, but rather a process of continual development. The process is concerned with maintaining the integrity or 'wholeness' of both the individual and the group.[5] The term *social identity*, first defined by Henri Tajfel[6], refers to the portion of an individual's conception of self based on their membership within a social group and the value derived from that membership. While Tajfel used social identity theory to analyze intergroup contact and social change, later this theory was utilized to examine the depersonalization of individual's action and self-understanding.[7]

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[5] Hans Mol, "The Identity Model of Religion: How it Compares with Nine Other Theories of Religion and How It Might Apply to Japan," Japanese Journal of Religious Studies 6, no. 1-2 (1979), 12.
[6] Henri Tajfel, editor. *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).
[7] John C. Turner and Michael A. Hogg, editors., *Rediscovering the Social Group: Self Catagorization Theory* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1987).

In these models, group identity is developed through a cognitive process that defines the self through social categories and establishes relationships within a specific group. These categories can be rooted in a number of characteristics such as ancestry, nationality, religion, history, and ethnicity, among others. "Social identities are based on the emotional significance and importance of group memberships for self-definition and their relevance to worldview."[8]

Religious identity is defined as any identity based on membership of a religious community. It contains a number of aspects but is generally understood as describing "how a person or group understands, experiences, shapes, and is shaped by the psychological, social, political, and devotional facets of religious belonging or affiliation."[9] Hans Mol's identity theory of religion understands religion as a system of meaning that sacralizes identity. He argues, "Sacralization protects identity, a system of meaning, or a definition of reality, and modifies, obstructs, or (if necessary) legitimates change."[10] He divides the process of sacralization into four overlapping mechanisms: objectification, commitment, ritual, and myth. Ritual is the most important mechanism to this research and will be discussed at length later.

A common religious identity is important to understanding Muslim communities across the globe. The idea of a shared Islamic identity can be traced back to the time of the Prophet Muhammad. One of the most important concepts in Islam is what the Qur'an

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[8] *Encyclopedia of Multicultural Physcology*. Ed. Yo Jackson (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Reference, 2006), s.v. "Ethnic and Racial Identity."
[9] *Encyclopedia of Identiy*. Ed. Ronald L. Jackson (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Reference, 2010), s.v. "Religious Identity."
[10] Mol, 16.

calls the *Ummah*, an Arabic word meaning community. While its use in the Qur'an referred generally to any number of communities[11], it later came to be understood as a specific term for the community of Muslim believers. The *Ummah* is understood as a global brotherhood of Muslims based on common belief and equality.

In addition to membership in the *Ummah,* belief and behavior are important in defining what it means to be Muslim. In addressing Muslim identity and how Islam came to develop into how we know it today, Richard W. Bulliet, an historian of medieval Islam, champions the importance of the Islamic "edge."[12] Bulliet argues that treatment of the edge of Islamic civilization, regions distant from the Hijaz (located in modern day Saudi Arabia), in the history of Islam's rise is necessary to understand how Islam developed as an institution. In the early centuries of Islamic history the community came to incorporate many non-Arab converts who "created a new society simply by trying to determine how best to live as Muslims."[13] When Islamic civilization expanded into foreign lands, it became necessary to define those acts that were "Islamic" and those that were not. In this way, questions of legality, tradition and ritual became increasingly important in forming a unified Muslim identity.

A third type of identity with which this research is concerned is ethnic identity. Ethnic identity, broadly defined, is constituted through linguistic and historical similarities, physical characteristics, and notions of culture distinctive to a particular group. Utilizing these social categories, individuals define their sense of self and establish

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[11] Examples include Q 2:213, 3:110,, 6:108, 10:47, 13:30 16:36, 23:44, 35:24 among others.
[12] Richard W. Buliet, *Islam: The View from the Edge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).
[13] Ibid., 98.

an affiliation within their larger community. These identities are created based on the social experiences of individuals within a community that offer exposure to "messages and actions that provide information on group identity and race-related matters."[14]

Construction of ethnic identity has very little to do with genetic markers; it is rather the result of a number of social transactions. These transactions include the influence of family, community, school, and other institutions. Paramount in the formation of an individual's ethnic identity is racial socialization, "the process by which individuals are exposed to the messages and actions that provide information on group identity and race-related matters."[15]

UNDERSTANDING RITUAL

There are two dominant discourses on religion and ritual, the structuralist approach and the functionalist approach. While structuralists are interested in defining religion, the functionalist method of examining the larger role religions play in the social context is most useful for this research. Functionalism sees ritual as a main instrument for preserving social order. One of the earliest functionalists, Emile Durkheim, argues ritual, as a religious practice, transmits social sentiment and enables the expression of one's deep connection to their community.[16] While Durkheim approached the topic with the goal of presenting a unified theory of religion based on symbolic action, Arnold Van Gennep, a contemporary of Durkheim, was more concerned with analyzing ritual on its

[14] "Ethnic and Racial Identity."
[15] "Ibid.
[16] Daniel L. Pals, *Eight Theories of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 107.

own terms.[17] Basing his work on comparisons of a wide array of rituals from mostly indigenous traditions spanning the globe, Van Gennep recognizes a pattern present in nearly all rites of passage. He sees three distinct stages through which the participants' progress: separation, transition and incorporation. It is important to note that van Gennep points out that these phases are not equally developed or important in all ceremonies.

Building on Durkheim and Van Gennep's work, Victor Turner examines the communal sense of transition rites of passage produce in their participants.[18] He argues, through ritualized acts participants shed their social ties for a brief time thus becoming ambiguous entities. They enter into a state of liminality which fosters the development of a unique form of camaraderie among participants he terms *communitas*. Ritual, through the experience of liminality, therefore, is a principal mechanism for reinforcing social order. He argues rituals employ symbols, verbal cues, and behavior to diffuse tensions that may arise in the social structure. In other words ritual holds a high position in the hierarchy of regulatory institutions, which serve to correct divergences from prescribed behavior. [19]

Death rituals, including ritualized mourning, are among the most important rites of passage in the human life cycle. They have been studied across cultures and across disciplines. Anthropologist A.R Radcliffe-Brown examined the act of mourning and its

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[17] Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrieelle L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).
[18] Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969).
[19] Turner, 97.

relation to social structure.[20] He sees the one sided weeping by the living for the dead that occurs during funerary ceremonies as an affirmation of social ties that are endangered by a death. Similarly, in his discussion of the function of mortuary ritual, Mol writes, "Religions were essentially and irrevocably committed to healing and reconciling what is broken and to stabilizing and reinforcing wholeness. … At the very moment that death or frustration undermines wholeness, religion interprets the event in the context of its meaning system."[21]

In earlier works Van Gennep treats mourning rituals "as an aggregate of taboos and negative practices marking an isolation from society,"[22] however, in his later work the author corrects that oversimplification. For him, funerary rites are complex phenomenon commemorating not only the transitional period of the deceased but an episode wherein the survivors' status is also in flux. The dead leave the temporal world and begin their existence in the afterlife. The living, however, enter a transitional period of grief and mourning. He explains, "During mourning, the living mourners and the deceased constitute a special group, situated between the world of the living and the world of the dead."[23] He notes that while one would assume rites of separation to be the most important stage in death ritual, incorporation rituals prove to be most extensive.

Yaseen Nooran's research looks at a specific funerary rite in the Islamic world. He shows the importance of funeral rites not to religious identity formation but to the

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[20] A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Andaman Islanders: A Study in Social Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922).
[21] Mol, 15-16.
[22] Van Gennep, 146.
[23] Ibid., 147.

establishment of a national ethos.[24] He examines the neoclassical funeral elegy in Egypt at the turn of the twentieth century. Supporting the structuralist approach to ritual and community, he sees the impetus behind the elegies given at a political leader's funeral as exalting the society, its social structure, and its values through the depiction of its ruler. The funeral elegy "always has to do with the creation and sustenance of a community's self-image."[25]

Clifford Geertz, however, challenges these sociological approaches that see ritual as simply sustaining the status quo.[26] He sees the above-mentioned approaches, underscoring the ways in which religion and ritual intensify and perpetuate social structures, as deficient in understanding the role religion and ritual have in social change. This is because they cannot differentiate between culture and social structure.

For Geertz, culture and social systems are two distinct components of existence. Culture, he argues, is a system of meanings and symbols that mediate social interaction. Social systems, on the other hand, are the patterns of societal exchange. In other words, "Culture is the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret the experience and guide their action; social structure is the form that action takes, the actually existing network of social relations."[27] It is important to note here that religion, for Geertz, is not simply occupied in the private sphere, it is necessarily public. Geertz argues that by giving equal attention to each of the two components, culture and social system, it

[24] Yaseen Noorani, "A Nation Born in Mourning: The Neoclassical Funeral Elegy in Egypt," Journal of Arabic Literature 28 (1997): 38-67.
[25] Ibid., 40.
[26] Clifford Geertz, "Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese Example," American Anthropologist 59 (Feb., 1957).
[27] Ibid., 33.

becomes possible to see beyond the structure-conserving function of religion to expose the role religious belief and ritual play in social formation and upheaval.

To demonstrate his thesis, Geertz discusses a failed funeral rite for a young deceased Javanese boy he witnessed while conducting research in Java where debates between secular nationalism and Islamic modernism were raging.[28] Through his discussion and analysis of the controversies and complexities surrounding this funeral rite, Geertz shows that religious ritual may act as a source of social anxiety not merely a reflection of underlying stressors. He shows how the religious practice of burial had become a political action. As a political action the ritual takes on formative significance, acting as a vehicle for social change.

[28] Ibid., 35-47.

Mourning, Identity, and the role of Urbanization

The regulation of women's mourning ritual has played an important role in Islamic identity construction and maintenance in times of cultural conflict. This has translated into the regulation and censuring of women's performative wailing. Conversely, as a component of mandatory exchanges known as *gham-xadi,* in which it is incumbent on women to visit relations who have experienced joyous and sorrowful events, wailing rituals are a critical component of ethnic identity formation for Pashtun women. This chapter looks at women's performance of mourning rituals in the maintenance of Pashtun ethnic identity in Pakistan, arguing that the practice of funeral visitations is crucial to Pashtun women's ethnic identity construction and has become an imperative in recent years with the rise of urbanization in the country.

THE PASHTUN

The term Pashtun, sometimes spelled Pushtun, Pakhtun or in the colonial tradition Pathan, refers to the ethnically and linguistically unique inhabitants of southeast Afghanistan and northwest Pakistan. With a population of approximately 40 million, Pashtuns are considered one of the planet's largest tribal groups. While there has not been an official census in Afghanistan, a 1996 demographic estimate ranks Pashtuns as the country's largest ethnic group, making up 40 percent of the Afghan population.[29] In Pakistan, however, Pashtuns make up a much smaller percentage of the population.

[29] Library of Congress Country Studies, Afghanistan, last modified 1997, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/

Punjabis dominate Pakistani demographics, making up 55 percent of the population; Pashtuns constitute a mere 10 percent of all Pakistanis.[30] Traditionally, the majority of Pashtun men have worked as sedentary farmers, combining agricultural and livestock farming while a significant portion work as migratory herders.[31]

Pashtuns speak an eastern Iranian language called Pashto written using an augmented Arabic script and is heavily influenced by Arabic, Persian and to a lesser extent Urdu. The two main dialects differ in their pronunciation; the southern dialect preserves the *sh* and *zh* sounds while northern manifestations of the language pronounce these as *kh* and *gh* respectively.[32] The language dates back to the early 16th century and possibly as far back as the 11th century, grew in prominence starting at the end of the 18th century and was declared the national language of Afghanistan in 1936.[33]

Despite inhabiting a vast and topographically diverse region and having a segmented and decentralized social system, Pashtuns have a well-defined and carefully maintained identity. Fredrik Barth discusses in his article "Pathan Identity and its Maintenance," though maintenance of this identity is a conscious goal for Pashtuns of various locations, "this will be a goal pursued within the limited perspective of highly discrepant local settings."[34] He addresses the details of this maintenance writing,

> The cultural diversity which we observe between different Pathan communities, and which objectively seems to be of an order of magnitude comparable to that

[30] The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th ed., s.v. "Pakistan."
[31] The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th ed., s.v. "Pashtun."
[32] This difference in pronunciation accounts for some of the variations in Romanization standards.
[33] The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th ed., s.v. "Pashto language."
[34] Fredrik Barth. "Pathan Identity and its Maintenance" in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,* ed. Fredrik Barth (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), 117.

> between any such community and neighboring non-Pathan groups, does not provide criteria for differentiating persons in terms of ethnic identity. On the contrary, members of this society select only certain cultural traits, and make these the unambiguous criteria for ascription to the ethnic group.[35]

He defines the attributes necessarily associated with the Pashtun identity as patrilineal descent, Islam, and the "Pathan custom."

All Pashtuns trace their lineage patrilineally to King Saul of Israel through his grandson Afghana. Western scholarship challenges that genealogy, locating the origins of the Pashtun people with the ancient Aryans.[36] Pashtun society is divided into around 60 different tribes consisting of clans and sub-clans.[37] The major tribal federations of Afghanistan are the Durrani, located to the south of Kabul, and the Ghilzay, living east of Kabul. Additionally, there are dozens of independent tribes living in northwest Pakistan.[38] Though there is considerable interest, perceptions of acceptable genealogies varies from region to region and even person to person. However, Pashtuns universally, Barth argues, agree that patrilineal decent of one sort of another is necessary.

A central component of Pashtun membership is the Islamic faith. "A Pashtun is by definition a Muslim as by birth he obtains an inalienable right to Pashtunness; hence Pashtunness and Muslimness do not have to coalesce; they are within each other."[39] The Pashtun are an overwhelmingly Sunni ethnic group living in Afghanistan, Pakistan and

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[35] Ibid., 119.
[36] "Pashto language."
[37] Barth,119.
[38] "Pashtun"
[39] Olesen, Asta, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1996), 33.

surrounding areas following the Hanafi School of law.[40] A small number of tribes living near the eastern boarder of the Waziristan region follow the Shi'a tradition. Additionally, Sufism, the Naqshbandi order specifically, holds influence with a number of Pashtuns. Pashtuns consider Qais, who lived at the time of the Prophet, among their ancestors. Because their ancestry dates to King Saul, and their forebear converted to Islam at the time of the Prophet, Barth points out, Pashtuns consider themselves as having " no infidel past, nor do they carry in their history the blemish of defeat" and subsequent conversion.[41]

THE PASHTUN CODE OF ETHICS

The most significant factor contributing to Pashtun identity construction and maintenance is active participation in Pashtun customs. While speaking the Pashto language can be considered under this category, it is not a sufficient to warrant inclusion into the Pashtun community. Barth illustrates this point quoting the common Pashtun adage, "He is Pathan who *does* Pashto, not (merely) who *speaks* Pashto."[42] Pashto here refers to a specific code of ethics, typically called *Pashtunwali*. Pashtunwali, often discussed as an "honor code," dates back to the ancient period prior to Pashtun acceptance of Islam. It provides exhaustive regulations for personal interactions and public conduct including defining proper relations between men and women, family

[40] Ibid., 33.
[41] Barth, 119.
[42] Ibid., 119.

members and Pashtuns and outsiders.[43] As one author put it, "This code of honour contains values if life and embraces all the activities from the cradle to the grave."[44] This code, according to Barth, consists of a number of central institutions, which he identifies as hospitality, councils and seclusion.

The first institution, hospitality, or *melmastia*, stipulates that a person be responsible for an outsider. This is seen as a sacred duty. The melmastia responsibility includes providing for a guest's needs and assuring their security. Each village has its own guesthouse for this purpose or will use its mosque to house visitors. "In return, the guest is obligated to recognize the authority and sovereignty of the host over property and persons present."[45] Due to the necessarily temporary nature of this exchange and the implication of reciprocity, the host-guest relationship is one of equality.

The second central institution to Pashtunwali is the council, or *jirga*, is a tribunal of men held to decide on a particular issue of common concern. The members of these councils are equals and there is no one designated as speaker or leader among them. The jirga does not rule by majority, rather discussion continues until all men are in agreement, or those who will not agree abandon the council in an act of protest. Barth sees the jirga as "a forum where important Pathan virtues, such as courage, judgment, dependability, and morality can be acted out, while a man's influence and respect shown to him is made apparent through the procedure."[46]

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[43] *Encyclopedia of the People of Asia and Oceania*, ed. Barbara A. West (New York: Facts on File, 2009), s.v. "Pashtuns (Afghans, Pakhtoons, Pakhtuns, Pathan, Pukhtuns, Pushtoons, Pushtuns)."
[44] Abdul Quddus, Syed, *The Pathans* (Lahore: Ferozsons Ltd., 1987), 67.
[45] Barth, 120-121.
[46] Ibid., 122.

The final institution of Pashtunwali, according to Barth, is seclusion, or *purdah*. This refers to the segregation of public spaces into two distinct arenas: male and female space. When financially feasible, Pashtun women remain within the walls of their households. He sees purdah as a means of emphasizing male virility and insulating men from public ridicule of their performance of domestic duties.[47] Most importantly the practice of gendered seclusion protects a man's reputation, which can be effected by the behavior of the women in his family.

Later scholars have added to Barth's enumeration of fundamental institutions to the Pashtun code of ethics. The Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan's entry for Pashtunwali leaves melmastia intact, but does not recognize the preeminence of jirga and purdah.[48] It considers *nanawati*, or protection, as apart from hospitality. This refers to the obligation of one to provide mediation when someone attempts to make amends for injuries they have caused as well as to protect anyone seeking asylum. The entry also presents *jirga* as a component of what is considered to be a more important principle, *badal* or retaliation. Insults, property damage, and blood feuds all require *badal* by Pashtunwali. S. Iftikhar Hussain, a Pashtun himself, adds *paighor* to our understanding of *Pashtunwali.*[49] *Paighor* can be understood as taunting and is tied to the idea of *badal*. Failure to respond to a taunting of one's honor, he says, leads to the erosion of one's

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[47] See note 17.

[48] *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan*, ed. Lugwig W. Adamec (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2003) s.v. "Pashtunwali."

[49] Iftikhar Hussain, S. *Some Major Pukhtoon Tribes along the Pak-Afghan Border* (Pakistan: Area Study Centre, 2000), 22-23.

status in Pashtun society. Also considered central components of Pashtunwali include *nanawatee*, or supplication of those one has wronged.[50]

These institutions contribute to the maintenance of Pashtun identity because they provide for the public performance of Pashtunness. "The public fora provide opportunities to perform and be judged by other persons … Whenever men meet in councils, wherever guests arrive and hospitality is dispensed, core Pathan values are acted out and adequacy of performance is judged and sanctioned."[51]

WOMEN AND THE PASHTUN CODE OF ETHICS

The problem with the treatment of Pashtun society given by these scholars is that they present a solely male understanding of Pashtun identity. Nowhere is women's participation in *Pashtunwali* presented in these accounts. Two scholars, Benedicte Grima and Amineh Ahmed, have redefined the Pashtun code of ethics from the female perspective by examining the female code of conduct, understood as a complex exchanging of *gham-xadi* visits.[52]

Grima's ethnography, *The Performance of Emotion among Paxtun Women: The Misfortunes Which Have Befallen Me,* is based on fieldwork conducted over the course of two years in Pashtun regions of Pakistan. She examines accounts and stories Pashtun women tell to other Pashtun women during *gham-xadi* exchanges, which occur on occasions of *gham*, or sorrow, and *xadi*, or joy. She looks at both life stories and

[50] Inam-ur-Rahim and Alain Viaro, *Swat: An Afghan Society in Pakistan* (Karachi: City Press, 2002), 103.
[51] Barth., 123.
[52] Benedicte Grima, *The Performance of Emotion among Paxtun Women: The Misfortunes Which Have Befallen Me* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992).

narratives of misfortune and concludes that these performances of emotion act as a female form of the *Pashto* ethic. She goes on to show how performance of these emotions are a means of female agency that often goes unacknowledged in discussions of Pashtun society.

Like Grima's work, Amineh Ahmed's monograph *Sorrow and Joy Among Muslim Women: The Pashtuns of Northern Pakistan* is based on fieldwork conducted among Pashtun women living in Northern Pakistan.[53] When examining the role of female ritual in social organization, she observed both wedding celebrations and funeral observances hosted and attended by elite Pashtun women. Her research challenges the existing narrative of Muslims women's absence from public spheres. She argues Pashtun women are not idle; rather they navigate a complex system of social structures that begin in the home. Regarding *Pashtunwali*, Ahmed writes,

> *Gham-khadi* has come to assume a priority among Pukhtuns as a contemporary principle of *Pakhtunwali* (such as forms of hospitality, revenge, agnatic rivalry) are acted out in funerary and wedding events … *Gham-khadi* constitutes the 'work of life' (*zeest-rozgar*), through which Bibiane [wealthy Pashtun women] maintain the fabric of social life by sustaining inter- and intra-family relationships. Bibiane's sense of their *gham-khadi* obligations underpins their understanding of personhood.[54]

What follows is a discussion of what exactly these exchanges entail and how they relate to the construction and maintenance of Pashtun identity.

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[53] Amineh Ahmed, *Sorrow and Joy Among Muslim Women: The Pukhtuns of Northern Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
[54] Amineh Ahmed, "Death and Celebration among Muslim Women: A Case Study from Pakistan" *Modern Asian Studies 39,* no. 4 (2005): 931-932.

Gham-xadi exchanges are incumbent on both Pashtun men and women. These exchanges are performed after *ghams* or a *xadis*. These two categories refer not only to funerals and weddings but encompass a number of events. Among the events a hierarchy exists that holds marriages to be the ultimate *xadi* and funerals as the most important *gham* event. Grima notes that events of sorrow outweigh happy occasions in terms of significance.[55] Therefore if a wedding and a funeral were to be held on the same day, attendance at the funeral would prevail over the wedding. Another form of exchange that runs parallel to the *gham-xadi* framework is the *tapos* exchange wherein women visit those who are sick.

Gham-xadi visits differ depending on the nature of the event, and the same event may be a *xadi* for men and a *gham* for women. *Xadi* events are often referred to as *mobaraki*, meaning congratulations. They are commemorated in different ways. For the birth of a son, visitors come as soon as possible and are welcomed into the bedroom to visit the new mother and son. On the occasion of a circumcision a party is thrown in celebration wherein guests are served food. In both cases, a gift of cash from the visitor is typical. The most important *xadi* event is the wedding, however this is only a *xadi* for the groom. Wedding parties are invitational, but attendance by those who are invited is mandatory. Prior to her wedding, a bride will be visited out of obligation, though she is not congratulated in these visits. In urban areas, Grima reports, there may be a henna party prior to the ceremony, but the bride, her mother and her sisters will not participate.

[55] Ibid., 49.

It is only the women from the groom's circle that partake in this celebration. A wedding is a time of intense sorrow for a bride.[56]

When women speak of going on a *Gham* visitation it is referred to as *doa*, or prayer, *'ozer*, or regret, *las niwa*, or holding of the hand. All three terms, however, refer to lamentation. The ritualized lament Pashtun women perform at these is referred to as *ghare*. Funeral ceremonies take place over the course of three days, with a commemoration of the death held every Friday for 40 days. A meal is prepared and distributed throughout the village on the ceremonial days. On these occasions, the death is announced from the mosque's loudspeaker. Everyone in the village is expected to visit the house of the deceased as quickly as possible. In the deceased's home, during the funeral proceedings, "women remain inside the house with the body, moaning, lamenting, and weeping together, sharing grief, leaning on and supporting each other physically, touching and holding each other, and taking each other's infants. It is the women who become possessed in their grief over the deceased."[57] The body is cleansed and dressed for burial, then presented to the mourners. Grima reports that hundreds of women and children gather in the deceased's home silently observing, chatting or wailing. These wails are called *sanda* and are spontaneous yet formulaic chants. These chants are addressed to the dead or to God and have themes of abandonment and loss.[58]

[56] Grima, 50-57.
[57] Ibid., 58.
[58] Ibid., 59.

MOURNING AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY

As the most important event in the *gham-xadi* hierarchy, visitations after a death and attendance and participation in mourning rites during funerals are obligatory and crucial tools for the construction of self-identity. Expression of *gham* is one of the few ways in which Pashtun women are allowed to speak for themselves in their own voice. It is therefore crucial to the development of that voice. Young unmarried women are not required to participate in these exchanges, as they are not considered adults until they have been wed. Proper emotion and expression of that emotion is a learned behavior. The learning of this conduct is part of the process of reaching adulthood and thus defining one's fully developed self.

Furthermore, mourning rituals and *gham-xadi* exchanges help to reinforce a woman's Pashtun identity. One's Pashtun identity is built on their adherence to the Pashtun ethic and the performance of those acts required by it. Therefore to wail, for one's own loss or loss experienced by those in one's *gham-xadi* network is a means of asserting one's Pashtun identity. Due to their reliance on the men in their lives for support and social standing, Women are most affected by the death of a loved one, specifically a husband or father. During the funerary rites, visitations and shared mourning reinforce social connections with the deceased, but more importantly with those with whom they share in the act of mourning. Ahmed sums up this idea, writing "The work of Pukhtun mourning thus builds ethnic identity and identification across regional and national

boundaries, enacts inter-class solidarity under the auspices of *Pukhtunwali*, and contests non-Islamic forms."[59]

Participation in mourning rituals is subjected to the gaze of other Pashtun women who pass judgment on each other's morality and subsequent Pashtuness. Not to participate in these rituals exposes oneself to criticism and even ridicule. Grima writes, "Neglecting this public display anguish, even to the point of going against the rules of decorum could lead others to suspect her relationship … Lamenting is a breach of Muslim decorum set down by men, but among women it is obligatory as a signal of love and devotion."[60] Pashtun women, thus, are hyper aware of those watching and passing judgment on their behavior and strive to adhere to the principles of *Pashtunwali* when observing mourning rituals. Judgments are made about a woman's character based on her participation. "People falling short of prompt reciprocity in *gham-khadi* are referred to as bad … In contrast, '*khogmun* people' (responsive to another's hurt) perform *gham-khadi* out of sensitivity and respect."[61]

URBANIZATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

With the occurrence of significant social and cultural changes taking place in Pakistan, a crisis is occurring wherein Pakistani Pashtuns' culture and social structure, as defined by Geertz, come into conflict. The maintenance of Pashtun identity through the ritual of shared mourning is increasingly important at the present moment as a result of

[59] Ahmed, 99
[60] Grima, 140.
[61] Ahmed, 150.

this identity crisis brought on by urbanization, globalization and women's employment outside of the home.

Pakistan has one of the highest urbanization rates in Asia.[62] Urbanization in Pakistan began early in the nation's history and has been a strong force in the country. Throughout the 1950s, the annual rate of Pakistan's urban growth was 4.7 percent.[63] In 1915, 19 percent of the population lived in urban centers, a mere ten years later that number was up to 24 percent. By 1970, almost 30 percent of all Pakistanis lived in urban cities.[64] The rate of Urbanization continued to climb, by 1993 34 percent of the Pakistani population dwelled in large urban cities.[65] In 2010, 36 percent of the total population was urbanized. The annual rate change measuring urbanization from 2010-2015 is projected to be 3.1 percent.[66] While population is steadily growing, the growth in urban centers is largely due to rural to urban migration taking place in the country.

When looking at the cities of Pakistan, it is possible to differentiate between old cities, like Peshawar, whose origins pre-date the British presence in the area, modern cities, like Karachi, which developed during the colonial period, and new cities, like Ahmadnagar, which arose after Pakistan gained independence.[67] Pakistan's old cities were once capitals of principalities, located on the boarder of two principalities, or the

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[62] Mohammad Sabihuddin Butt "Prospects of Pakistan Urbanization" *Pakistan Economic and Social Review 34*, No. 2 (1996): 156.
[63] W.M. Phillips, Jr. "Urbanization and Social Change in Pakistan" *Phylon 25*, No. 1 (1964): 33.
[64] G.B.S. Mujahid, "Rural-Urban Migration, Urban Underemployment and Earnings Differentials in Pakistan" *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv 111*, No. 3 (1975): 585.
[65] Sabihuddin Butt, 156.
[66] Central Intelligence Agency "CIA World Fact Book – Pakistan" Central Intelligence Agency "https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pk.html" (accessed March 18, 2012).
[67] Vyacheslav Belokrenitsky, "The Urbanization Processes and the Social Structure of the Urban Population in Pakistan," *Asian Survey 14*, No. 3 (1974): 245.

center of a region not belonging to the feudal system. During the colonial period many of these cities lost the importance they boasted during feudal times, others developed new features during this period. Many modern cities developed as a result of the British administrative system or military demands. Additionally, the expansion of agricultural production and capitalist industrialization contributed to the creation of modern cities. New cities find their origins with the economic growth the country had witnessed since independence. These cities are small, industrial centers. The majority of Pakistani cities are considered modern cities.[68]

Not only are people moving from rural areas to more modern metropolises, the shape of the Pakistani economy is changing. From 1950-1985 the real GDP grew by an average of 5 percent each year. In the 1980s, the rate of growth was consistently in the 6.5 percent range.[69] In recent decades growth has trailed off. In 2009, real GDP growth was 1.7 percent, however a year later in 2010, it had risen to 3.8 percent.[70] Not only has the economy grown significantly over the past six decades, the economy has shifted from being based on agriculture and small, traditional manufacturing to one based on industrial and service sectors. In 2011, agriculture made up only 20.9 percent of Pakistan's GDP, whereas industry and services made up 25.8 and 53.3 percent respectively.[71]

Beyond the shift from an agricultural economy to one that is based in industrial production and services, Pakistani women have entered the work force. Inflation and a

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[68] Ibid., 246-247.
[69] Sabihuddin Butt, 156
[70] "CIA World Fact Book – Pakistan"
[71] Ibid.

rise in the cost of living in the country made it necessary to expand family income, "gradually but steadily more and more women found their way into the urban labour force."[72] Women of the middle class began entering the labor force through 'respectable occupations' like those in the scientific and medical fields, teaching, professional and clerical work. While this developed out of necessity, eventually women sought careers not out of economic need but for personal development and fulfillment. This is especially true among wealthy women.[73]

SOCIAL CHANGE AND IDENTITY CRISIS

The women Ahmed focuses on in her research are wealthy women who are living in urban centers away from their ancestral homelands, many of them pursuing careers. In this capacity, they are exposed to Pakistanis of other ethnic groups on a regular basis. This close contact to culturally varied groups and the distance from their own ethnic community creates an identity crisis that makes the proper maintenance of ethnic identity a pressing matter. When confronted with other cultural traditions there is a danger of losing one's own through assimilation or neglect. Antithetical to this model is the hyper emphasis of those social systems and practices that maintain cultural divisions. For Pashtun women looking to maintain their cultural distinctiveness, *Gham-xadi* exchanges generally, and funerary and mourning rites specifically, become imperative as a marker of ethnic identity and a link to ancestral homelands and the relationships in those villages.

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[72] Hamza Alavi, "Pakistan: Women in a Changing Society," *Economic and Political Weekly 23*, No. 26 (1988), 1329.
[73] Ibid., 1329.

Life in an urban center is necessarily and fundamentally different from that of the villages. As a result, Pashtun women's behavior in these two regions can differ greatly. As such, life in the cities is often bemoaned as a departure from one's cultural, moral structure and the natural order of things. Those who remain in the villages speak of the loss they experience from the absence of their kinfolk. As one woman related to Ahmed, "all the Khanan [landlords] have left the village and moved out; there is more independence and less love."[74] Those living in the cities recognize a decline in their own adherence to the Pashtun code of ethics as a result of their distance from the villages.

With many elite Pashtun men and women absent from the villages, perceptions of *gham-xadi* exchanges' importance in reconstituting and reinforcing social relations within the larger ethnic community is growing.[75] In this context we see that participation in *gham-xadi* exchanges, while in practice is weakening, is being conceived of as exceedingly more important to the maintenance of personal and Pashtun identity. As one woman from Swat told Ahmed, "my heart is in the [village house]. Our roots, our identity, are there. We are like the royal family there. In Islamabad we are nobody."[76] As people move to other cities and even countries, continued *gham-xadi* exchanges affirm Pashtun identity. In order to maintain the link to their villages, their roots, and the relationships they have fostered, women are compelled to participate in *gham-xadi* exchanges despite the many difficulties they involve.

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[74] Ahmed, 75.
[75] Ibid., 76.
[76] Ibid., 76.

CONCLUSION

Previous scholarship addresses Pashtun ethnic identity has focused on *Pashtunwali*, the Pashtun code of ethics that dictates proper behavior in all aspects of life, as a male phenomenon. Grima and Ahmed have made significant contributions to the study of Pashtuns as a people and specifically the study of Pashtun women's lives and the construction and maintenance of their personal and ethnic identities. The bereavement performance women carry out is an outlet for the self-definition of their voice and personhood. Additionally, G*ham-xadi* exchanges and the shared mourning rituals they require are crucial to women's conception of social membership. These rites are obligatory as a woman's participation in, or abstinence from, them is subject to the surveillance and judgment of her peers. To perform *gham-xadi* is to perform one's Pashtuness.

Pakistan has been undergoing significant economic growth and development, which has caused significant changes to the country's social structure. Additionally, as women have entered the workforce, their role in society has experienced significant changes. This new ordering of society has posed a challenged to the tradition Pashtun culture and how women enact that culture. In the urban setting women come into contact with other cultures and are distanced from their own. As a result the adherence to the Pashtun code of ethics has decline among city dwelling Pashtun women. However, in reaction to this phenomenon the perceived importance of *gham-xadi* networks and exchanges has grown significantly. Women bemoan their decline, stress their importance

and are compelled to maintain such networks despite the many obstacles presented by modern life.

Women's Mourning in Islamic Sources

Pashtun women are required by their society, as a term of their membership in it, to participate in shared mourning practices that affirm links to their peers and their ancestry. However, Islamic orthodoxy forbids women from participating in such ritualized, dramatic acts of mourning. Pashtun women continue to participate in these performances of grief in reaction to the death of a loved one despite pressures to forgo these rituals placed on women by a number of Islamic institutions. Regulation of this type is not simply a modern phenomenon but is rooted in the early centuries of Islam, when Islamic identity was constructed in opposition to outsiders, often through the regulation of ritual behavior.

The goal of this chapter is twofold. First, it seeks to establish that female lamentation has been a space wherein Islamic identity is created and maintained by examining the anxieties surrounding this practice as seen through early, classical and modern Islamic institutions. Early reports of the Prophet's teachings present the Prophet explicitly forbidding such behavior. These reports serve as a basis for later works of Islamic law, which, while concerned with women's mourning, do not pay particular attention to acts of wailing. However, in the modern period there has been a resurgence of anxieties surrounding the performance of mourning rituals, which can be seen through discussions in conduct manuals.

The second goal of this chapter is to show that these legalistic institutions are not simply scholarly endeavors devoid of practical application, but pervade modern social consciousness and thus place real pressures on Pakistani women generally and Pashtun

women specifically. In the formative period of Islam, as we shall see, the issue of women's mourning was used to distinguish Muslim society from the *Jahaliyah*, or the age of ignorance prior to the rise of Islam. Whereas in the modern period the regulation of women's mourning is being utilized to distinguish proper Muslim piety from perceived cultural intrusions.

ISLAMIC SOURCES

This chapter examines the relationship between women's mourning rituals and Islamic identity construction and maintenance by examining a number of Islamic textual sources. The first sources examined are *hadith* collections composed in the early centuries after the death of the Prophet. These collections present the *sunnah*, the collective teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, told through the *hadith* or accounts related by the Prophets companions through a chain of transmitters, called an *isnad*. These *hadith* describe the Prophet's actions, approvals, disapprovals and sayings. This research focuses mainly on the Canonical *hadith* collections of Bukhari, Abu Dawud and others. These collections have been canonized over the centuries and have come to be accepted as *sahih*, or authentic by the Muslim community.

These accounts contained in the *sunnah* are not just of historical importance for Muslims across the globe, but also have significant legal implications. These legal rulings on women's bereavement in classical Islamic jurisprudence, known as *fiqh,* are the second set of sources important to this discussion. While the Qur'an is understood by Muslims to be the literal word of God and the principal foundation for Islamic law, it is

silent on a great number of issues with which Islamic society is concerned. For guidance on these topics, Muslim legal scholars refer to the *hadith*. The majority of Muslims, then, hold that the teachings of the Prophet are intended to augment, explain, and qualify the teachings of the Qur'an. Therefore, the *sunnah* developed as the interpretive lens used by jurists and theologians to understand and interpret the Qur'an.[77] In the dominant Sunni schools of Islamic law, the importance of *hadith* deemed reliable, like the collections of Bukhari and Abu Dawud, to legal rulings is second only to the Qur'an.

Hadith are used in different ways to determine the true meaning of Qur'anic verses. First, they are utilized to demonstrate a more specific meaning of a general decree. Second, they provide clarification for unclear or ambiguous verses. Finally, *hadith* could be used to repeal or append a Qur'anic verse.[78] Because the Qur'an's is not a book of law, it does not discuss in detail procedures for many institutions, like funeral procedures and burial rites, typically thought of as Islamic. For this reason, the *hadith* have been heavily relied upon for the development of *fiqh*.

Pashtuns are overwhelmingly Sunni Muslims adhering to the Hanafi School of law, therefore this discussion will mainly concern itself works of Islamic jurisprudence following this tradition. Among the works of *fiqh* that this research examines is Burhan al-Din al-Marghinani's *al-Hidayah fi Sharh Bidayat al-Mubtadi*. Written in twelfth century*, al-Hidayah* is a significant work that has "placed its stamp on most books that

[77] Jonathan A.C. Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World* (Oxford: One World, 2009), 151.
[78] Ibid., 150-152.

came after it."[79] *Al-Hidayah* is particularly useful to this discussion, as it has remained an extremely popular text used by a number of South Asian institutions. Also part of the discussion are the eleventh century work *Kitab al-Mabsut* written by Muhammad Ibn Ahmad al-Sarakhsi . This is a work of *furu*, a legal genre that lays out norms of Islamic law. *Kitab al-Mabsut* is a commentary on Muhammad Ibn Muhammad al-Marwazi's *Mukhtasar* and is an impressively comprehensive work important to the development of the genre.

The final sources with which this research is concerned are modern behavioral manuals. Through these sources *fiqh* rulings are disseminated to the masses. These manuals, printed all over the Islamic world including the Middle East, South Asia, North Africa and the Americas, supplement the sparse treatment in the Qur'an by providing information from the *hadith* along side legal rulings.[80] This research looks at manuals published in Pakistan including those produced by Islamic institutions of learning. These include general manuals for correct behavior, like Thana Allah's *Ma La Buda Minhu* Abd al-Rahman Shad's *Dos and Do Nots in Islam* and *Bihishti Zewar* written by Ashraf Ali Thanawi, as well as those that refer specifically to behavior on the occasion of a death like Muhammad Abd al-Hay Arifi's *Ahkam Mayyit*.

Manuals regarding death practices are extremely comprehensive in their discussions of burial prescriptions. They provide instructions of numerous contingencies from the death of a fetus by miscarriage to the death of an adult in such a way that the

[79] Burhan al-Din al-Farghani al-Marghinani, al-Hidayah: The Guidance, trans. Imran Ahsan Khan Nyazee (Bristol: Amal Press, 2008), xxiii.
[80] *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*. Ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Lieden, The Netehrlands: Brill Academic Publishers, 2001) s.v. "Burial."

body is dismembered or unidentifiable. The detail provided in these manuals shows the importance of proper burial to the communities in which they are published.

It is important to begin by noting that these sources are particularly important to the case of women's mourning rituals because the Qur'an makes no mention of the practice of wailing anywhere in it. One verse, 60:12[81], may refer to this practice indirectly. It reads,

> When the believing women come to you pledging to you that they will not associate anything with Allah, nor will they steal, nor will they commit unlawful sexual intercourse, nor will they kill their children, nor will they bring forth a slander they have invented between their arms and legs, nor will they disobey you in what is right - then accept their pledge and ask forgiveness for them of Allah. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.

Later exegetes have claimed this verse refers to wailing without naming it specifically. They claim that the phrase "what is right" alludes to proper mourning practices.[82] Because of this lack of guidance on the issue *hadith* reports became the sole basis for any legal rulings on the issue.

HADITH AND THE FORMATIVE PERIOD

G.H.A. Juynboll examined the chain of *isnads* attached to the earliest *hadith* accounts concerning wailing and argues that these are inauthentic *hadith* created after the death of the Prophet. The earliest available collections, dating to eighth century Medina, only mention wailing briefly and do not stress the prohibition. When looking at the

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[81] In this study, the Umm Muhammad Sahih International translation of the Qur'an is used , unless otherwise stated.

[82] G.H.A. Juynboll. *Muslim Tradition: Studies in Chronology, Provenance and Authorship of Early Hadith* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 99.

earliest Iraqi collections, Juynboll sees a number of references to women's wailing which display a harsh disapproval of the practice. He notes that when looking at the references to *niyahah,* or wailing, in the canonical *hadith* collections, all of them have Iraqi *isnads*, with very few exceptions.[83] He concludes that this concept was developed in Kufa, Iraq thirty years after the death of the Prophet at the earliest.

Concerning the Iraqi preoccupation with the prohibition on women's theatrical mourning practices he writes,

> These different customs were perhaps something typical of the mourning practices of the conquered people. It is likely that the Arab women, who accompanied their husbands to the conquered territories, were heavily influenced by the indigenous women who must have made up the over all majority. It was they who set the fashion and their mourning practices, gradually adopted by everyone, may have roused the anger of the irritation of the conquering Arabs.[84]

In this scenario, the institution of a proper Islamic burial procedure and mourning practice free of any resemblance to the local custom became a way to clearly define what it meant to be a Muslim living outside of the Islamic center.

Leor Halevi also examines the debates and anxieties surrounding funerary rites during the formative years of Islam. Halevi addresses the issue of woman's wailing in the centuries immediately following the death of the Prophet Muhammad through an examination of *hadith* traditions regarding funerary practices.[85] Like Juynboll, Halevi argues that not all areas of the Islamic world sought to regulate women's public

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[83] Ibid., 103-106.
[84] Ibid., 107.
[85] Leor Halevi, "Wailing for the Dead: The Role of Women in Early Islamic Funerals," Past & Present 183 (2004): 3-39.

participation in mourning rituals with the same vigor. He shows that, in the garrison city of Kufa, women were discouraged, even violently forbidden, from wailing publicly during funeral processions.

Halevi argues that religious scholars living in Kufa were significantly more disturbed by female bereavement than those in Medina, who paid little attention. He sees the censorship of women's public mourning as tied up in the process of defining, through opposition, what it meant to be a Muslim after Islam had lost its Prophet. Islamic clerics rebelled against what they say was an un-Islamic custom from the *Jahaliyah*. The restrictions of female participation in funerary practices in Kufa, which developed with an intensity not seen in Medina, he argues, are demonstrative of "the transformation of social ideology, which occurred as the centre of gravity of Islamic civilization shifted from the Arabian to the Mesopotamian environment."[86]

Ritual is a powerful tool in the construction of communal unity and identity. In this early period of Islamic civilization, we see women's mourning rituals first becoming a space through which Islamic identity is shaped and navigated. In Medina, the city of the Prophet, how exactly a Muslim behaved was a much less pressing question. Medina had long held an Islamic identity, as it was where the Prophet made his home while in exile from Mecca. As the empire expanded outwards, what behavior was and was not Islamic became an exceedingly relevant question. In the Islamic periphery Muslims were not the majority of the population; they came into close and constant contact with non-Muslims and were thus forced to navigate their identity in a much more active way.

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[86] Ibid., 7.

CONTENT OF THE *HADITH*

It is important to take a moment to look at the content of some of the *hadith* that Juynboll and Halevi examine. While compiled centuries ago, the canonical collections have maintained importance in today's society and thus still inform the modern understanding of proper practice in Islam. A number of the canonical *Hadith* compilers were concerned with the Prophet's teachings on funerals and death rituals. Bukhari, Abu Dawud, and Malik[87] all have books entirely devoted to the topic of funerals in their *Hadith* collections. In them, they present a number of commands made by the Prophet on proper observance in the case of a death, both prescriptive and proscriptive. Of the various *Hadith* compilers, Bukhari's collection is most preoccupied with women's mourning in particular. While the authenticity of these accounts has been called into question,[88] whether or not the Prophet truly expressed his disapproval of women's mourning is of no consequence to this discussion. These *hadith*, authentic or not, circulate in the consciousness of Muslim communities and thus apply pressure on women and serve to regulate female behavior.

We see that the prophet included the command to follow funerals in a list of seven obligations upon believers, which are presented opposite seven prohibitions.[89] In another *hadith*, the Prophet is quoted as saying that the duties of a Muslim are to follow a fellow Muslim's funeral processions, accept invitations made by another Muslim and to reply

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[87] Malik's *Muwatta* is not considered one of the six canonical hadith collections as it contains both hadith accounts and fiqh rulings. It is included in this discussion as it is well respected and widely used source.
[88] Gertrude H. Stern, "Muhammad's Bond with the Women," Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies 10, no.1 (1939): 194-196.
[89] Bukhari, Ṣaḥīḥ, v.2, bk.23 (K. al-Janā'iz, #331), at http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/hadith/bukhari/023-sbt.php (accessed 2/19/12).

when a believer sneezes.[90] These *hadith* begin Bukhari's book on funerals and establish the importance they hold within Muslim society. In both of these examples the duties listed are obligations on Muslims to their fellow believers, reaffirming their membership in a unified group. The Prophet did not just command that Muslims follow funeral biers, he is also reported to have specified that a funeral procession should not be followed by the sound of wailing.[91]

The *sunnah* handles mourning for the dead in a number of ways. The *Hadith* collections use various words in regards to mourning. The first word, *ḥadda*, is a verb typically understood as meaning 'to limit.' In these *hadith* it is used in the specific context of a wife mourning her husband's death, wherein she is limited in her ability to remarry for the *iddah* period. A husband's death should be mourned for a period of four months and ten days. [92] However, this refers to a specific type of mourning which will be discussed at length later. Other words used in the *hadith* accounts are bukā', n̄iyāḥ, and s̄iyāh are used in similar ways, in some cases appearing together in the same *hadith* account. Bukā' is used ambiguously to mean simply 'to cry' but also 'to wail' where as n̄iyāḥ and s̄iyāḥ, are used only in the sense of theatrical wailing.

The *hadith* accounts broach the prohibition of wailing in a number of ways. First, we see an ambiguity toward the appropriateness of mourning. Malik relates *hadith* wherein the Prophet allows women to cry out while a man is dying but instructs that their

[90] Bukhari, Ṣaḥīḥ, v.2, bk.23 (K. al-Janā'iz, #332).
[91] Abu Dawud, Sunan, bk. 20 (K. al-Janā'iz #3165), at http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/hadith/abudawud/ (accessed 2/19/12).
[92] Bukhari, Ṣaḥīḥ, v.2, bk.23 (K. al-Janā'iz, #369-371).

crying should cease upon the moment of his death.[93] This *hadith* is also related by Abu Dawud.[94] In another account present in Bukhari's collection, the Prophet tells a crying Fatima "It is all the same whether you weep or not."[95] Elsewhere, we find that mourning is allowed for a period of no more than three days unless one is mourning the death of a husband.[96]

The treatment of women's mourning in the *hadith* collections focuses predominantly on performative wailing. However, there is a distinction made between acceptable mourning and the forbidden wailing. We see that God does not punish those who shed tears out of sadness after a loss. In fact, Abu Dawud narrates an account of Muhammad crying freely after the death of a companion.[97] While weeping is viewed as a natural and acceptable reaction to death, wailing is strictly prohibited.[98]

We see this prohibition reinforced in a number of ways. First among them, we see that the dead are punished for the wailing done in their name.[99] However, this point is contestable. A number of *hadith* present this idea as a universal standard, a number of others say that only non-Muslims are punished for the mourning performed over them. [100]

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[93] Malik, Muwatta, bk.16 (Burials, #12.36), at http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/hadith/muwatta/ (accessed 2/19/12).
[94] Abu Dawud, Sunan, bk. 20 (K. al-Janā'iz #3105).
[95] Bukhari, Sahih, v.2, bk.23 (K. al-Janā'iz, #336).
[96] Bukhari, Sahih, v.2, bk.23 (K. al-Janā'iz, #369-371).
[97] Abu Dawud, Sunan, bk. 20 (K. al-Janā'iz #3157).
[98] Bukhari, Sahih, v.2, bk.23 (K. al-Janā'iz, #391), at http://www.muhaddith.org/cgi-bin/dspl_cgi.exe/form (accessed 2/21/12).
[99] Bukhari, Sahih, v.2, bk.23 (K. al-Janā'iz, #377,-380, 391).
[100] Bukhari, Sahih, v.2, bk.23 (K. al-Janā'iz, #375-376).

Such *hadith* accounts refer specifically to a Jewish woman who the Prophet says is being tortured in the grave. In fact, Malik presents this idea in relation to non-believers only.[101]

An alternative way in which these stories seek to regulate female mourning practices is through direct action. This action is of two kinds, cursing and physical intercession. Abu Dawud presents a number of *hadith* that describe the Prophet as cursing women who visit graves, women who wail and those women who listen to wailing. In another *hadith* Muhammad speaks harsh words at the prospect of Fatima visiting the graveyard.[102] Not only are these women cursed, the Prophet is quoted as declaring that those that tear at their clothes, slap their cheeks, shave their heads and follow "the ways and traditions of the Days of Ignorance" is not one among the Muslims.[103] These *hadith* accounts, transmitted by both Bukhari and Abu Dawud, are important first, because they assert that those who wail are not Muslims and secondly because they directly associate the act of wailing with the traditions of the *Jahaliyah*. Other *hadith*, collected by both Bukhari and Abu Dawud, assert that women pledged allegiance to the Prophet Muhammad, and in doing so promised that they would not "scratch the face, nor wail, nor tear the front of garments nor dishevel the hair."[104]

In addition to cursing those who wail and declaring them not among the believers, there are *hadith* accounts that depict the Prophet Muhammad as commanding others to prevent women from practicing the tradition through force. Bukhari related two versions

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[101] Malik, Muwatta, bk.16 (Burials, #12.37),.
[102] Abu Dawud, Sunan, bk. 20 (K. al-Janā'iz #3230, 3122, 3117).
[103] Bukhari, Sahih, v.2, bk.23 (K. al-Janā'iz, #382, 384-385) and Abu Dawud, Sunan, bk. 20 (K. al-Janā'iz #3124).
[104] Abu Dawud, Sunan, bk. 20 (K. al-Janā'iz #3125).

of this *hadith* transmitted by Aisha, in it a man reports to the Prophet that women were wailing over a death. The Prophet commands him to stop them. After he tries and fails three time the Prophet instructs the mad to "put dust in their mouths" in order to physically stop their wailing.[105]

Yet in another account the Prophet questions one woman's crying after a male family member had been martyred, asking, "Why does she weep, for the angels had been shading him with their wings until he was lifted away."[106] In this case we see that death, especially that of a martyr, is not to be mourned.

The *hadith* collections do not just contain guidance on how not to behave when someone dies; they also contain stories that promote the proper response to a death. As seen in the *hadith*, the proper Muslim reaction to death is forbearance. To wail over the dead is tantamount to protesting God's will. Death should rather be accepted gracefully. Bukhari relates a story in which we see this enacted. The son of a man named Abu Talha became ill and died while is father was not home. When Abu Talha returned home his wife informed him that his son was quiet and at peace. It was not until the mourning that she told him about the death of their son.[107] Nowhere in this story does Abu Talha's wife wail or even cry, rather she accepts the death, even waiting until the morning to inform her husband. In other *hadith* contained in Bukhari we see the Prophet command a woman who is sitting beside a grave and crying to "Fear Allah and be patient."[108]

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[105] Bukhari, Sahih, v.2, bk.23 (K. al-Janā'iz, #386, 392).
[106] Bukhari, Sahih, v.2, bk.23 (K. al-Janā'iz, #381).
[107] Bukhari, Sahih, v.2, bk.23 (K. al-Janā'iz, #388).
[108] Bukhari, Sahih, v.2, bk.23 (K. al-Janā'iz, #343, 372).

FIQH AND THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

The twelfth century scholar Burhan al-Din al-Farghani al-Marghinani, considered one of the leading imams of his time, wrote *al-Hidayah fi Sharh Bidayat al-Mubtadi* as a comprehensive work of *fiqh*. There are chapters on religious matters like purification and alms-giving, personal matters like marriage and divorce, as well as criminal matters such as theft and *hudud* punishments. Al-Marghinani discusses funerals at length in his book on prayer and addresses mourning in his book on divorce. When looking at these discussions it becomes clear that al-Marghinani was not concerned with women's wailing rituals.

In his chapter on funerals, al-Marghinani explains the proper procedure for bathing the corpse of the deceased and how to shroud the body. He discusses prayer over the body, in what way the bier should be carried and how to bury the body. Al-Marghinani discusses women's mourning only in the sense of *iddah*, or the waiting period required after divorce or the death of a husband. He places this in his book on divorce. He rules that women who are in mourning should not wear perfume, put khol on their eyes, use henna, or wear yellow and other adornments.[109] He also details the travels she may take while in mourning. In all of his lengthy discussion, al-Marghinani never mentions the practice of women's wailing.

It is no coincidence that this text was written in the eleventh century when Islamic civilization was at its peak. In a time when the Islamic community was not endangered by competing communities and identities, the maintenance of Muslim identity was not an

[109] al-Marghinani, 69.

imperative. Therefore, regulation of ritual mourning practices lessened. The question of the appropriateness of women's wailing was not at the forefront of Islamic legal scholars at this time.

BEHAVIOR MANUALS AND MODERN PAKISTAN

Ma La Buda Minhu written by Indian scholar Qad-i-Thana Allah near the turn of the 19th century devotes one of its eight chapters to funerals. In this discussion, Thana Allah points out that grieving and crying are acceptable reactions to the death of a loved one but that "raising of one's voice when crying, wailing over the dead, rending one's clothes, and beating oneself about the face and head" are strictly forbidden acts.[110] He then references the numerous reports that the deceased are tortured in the grave for the wailing that is carried out in their names and states that those Muslims who requested, condoned, would have been pleased by or merely did not prevent their loved ones for wailing over them would be punished in the grave as a result, adding "Otherwise a Muslim is not punished for the deeds of others."[111]

Abd al-Rahman Shad discusses funerals and mourning at length in his *Dos and Do Nots in Islam*. He says that it is the moral obligation of all Muslims to express condolences at the death of a fellow believer. He, like Thana Allah, points out that it is acceptable to "mourn over the death of dear ones because of the pain of separation

[110] Thana Allah, Qadi, *The Essential Handbook of Hanafi Fiqh*, al-Amriki, Maulana Yusuf Talal Ali, trans. (Lahore: Kazi Publication, 1985), 118.
[111] Ibid., 199.

compels" it.[112] He sites a story wherein the Prophet himself weeps upon the death of a loved one. He follows that discussion by denouncing theatrical wailing. He writes, "It is unlawful to wail with lamentations and strike the chest as well as the cheeks with hands. It is highly undesirable to tear at the clothes. … It is strictly prohibited in Islam to weep and cry aloud with various descriptions of the deceased."[113] He quotes that those who perform these acts are not among the Muslims and that women who wail and those who listen to it are cursed.It is highly undesirable to tear at the clothes. … It is strictly prohibited in Islam to weep and cry aloud with various descriptions of the deceased."[114] He quotes that those who perform these acts are not among the Muslims and that women who wail and those who listen to it are cursed.

Ahkam Mayyit was written by the Pakistani Islamic scholar Muhammad Abd al-Hay Arifi in the 20th century.**[115]** This work is a comprehensive handbook on proper Islamic death rituals. Throughout the various discussions, the author refers back to women's mourning rituals specifically. In his chapter, Arifi cites *hadith* reporting the Prophet's statement that intentional wailing at the time of death will be punished. In the chapter addressing the funeral prayers, the author states that a true Muslim should express their disapproval of "those who rend clothes because of what has befallen them, and for those who break into loud lamentations and wailing and mourning."[116]

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[112] Shad, Abd al-Rahman, *Dos and Do Nots in Islam* (Lahore: Kazi Publications, 1983), 296.
[113] Ibid., 297.
[114] Ibid., 297.
[115] Arifi, Muhammad Abdul Hai, *The Islamic Way in Death*, Muhammad Shameen, trans. (Karachi: Idaratul Quran, 2001).
[116] Ibid., 93

The bulk of Arifi's discussion on women's mourning rituals expressly regards these practices as *bid'ah,* or innovation. He notes that at the time of death "all sorts of mistakes are committed, more so by women."[117] In his chapter entitled "Understanding Bid'ah" he explains that the acts associated with women's mourning rituals are *bid'ah* and thus *haram*, or forbidden. Not only do they adversely effect the dying and dead, Arifi says they cause women to "forget all about the need to recite the *Kalimah* or *Surah Ya Sin*."[118] He also finds fault with women's wailing as it causes women to break *purdah*, in these cases wailing women may not be properly covered or may embrace men with whom they should not have contact. In addition to acts of wailing, the author states the remembrance of a death on fixed dates is "a patent act of bid'ah."[119]

Most significant in this genre of works is Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi's prescriptive work *Bihishti Zewar*. The author, Thanawi, was a devotee of the Deobandi movement, which arose out of the Islamic school called Darul Uloom Deoband that was opened in 1866 in Deoband, India by Muhammad Qasim Nanautawi and other Islamic scholars. Darul Uloom has been likened to al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt in terms of important and respected theological institutions in the Muslim world.[120] The goal of the institution and the movement that grew from it is to resuscitate classical Islam, correct deviations which have occurred in the Muslim community's practice since the time of British colonization.

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[117] Ibid., 215.
[118] Ibid., 215.
[119] Ibid., 236.
[120] Zubair Zafar Khan, "An Assessment of Darul Uloom Deoband" *Islamic Quarterly 54*, No 1 (2010) 64.

Written in the early twentieth century, *Bihishti Zewar* serves as a guide for Muslim women, previously excluded from Islamic learning and conformity, to not only understand but also to practice Islam the 'proper' way. *Bihishti Zewar* "has been one of the most influential texts of the scripturalist reform movements characteristic of Muslim societies in the past century."[121] Reprinted time and again, the *Bihishti Zewar* is ubiquitous in South Asian bookstores and has come to be a standard wedding gift given to Muslim women in Pakistan.[122]

In this guide, Thanawi takes issue with a number of practices carried out by women on the occasion of death. First, he reprimands women who delay the burial of the deceased, reminding that the prophet insisted on a swift burial. He also discusses the third, tenth and fortieth days after a death wherein women commemorate a death by cooking a large amount of food and distributing it. He says this is not done out of charity, but rather with one's own reputation in mind. He warns his reader that this behavior results in a curse. The sin of the selfish motive is compounded by the inappropriate use of funds for these meals. He says the money used to pay for this is often borrowed or taken from the estate of the deceased.[123]

He discusses at length the practice of visitation wherein women share in one another's sorrow. He finds a number of issues with this. First, he criticizes women who come to a house in mourning to socialize, saying they laugh and tell stories and wear

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[121] Barbara Daly Metcalf , *Perfecting Women: Maulana Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi's Bihishti Zewar: A Partial Translation with Commentary*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 1.
[122] Ibid., 3.
[123] Ibid., 151-152.

ostentatious clothing. He finds fault with theses women's motives. He continues to say that some women do genuinely come to share in the sorrow of the house. While some, he says, join in the crying spuriously, others weep with sincerity. With the latter he also finds fault, not with their motives but their actions. He first points out that the Prophet Muhammad forbade the performance of histrionic wailing. He makes this point without further comment. He then explains a second evil of this practice, that it burdens those in mourning, prolonging their grief.[124]

Of the various practices Thanawi discourages, he says, "The *shari'at* does not sanction such these customs and fabricating new ways on your own is a great sin."[125] After enumerating the many reasons one should not carry on the practice of shared mourning, Thanawi offers up the way in which proper Muslim women should behave on the occasion of a death. He says women and men who are close in proximity to the house in mourning should stop briefly to comfort and encourage "patience." This initial visitation is sufficient and there should not be subsequent ones.[126]

In all of these examples we see that the debate surrounding women's mourning rituals is, at its root, a debate about perceived cultural intrusions into once pure religious practices. All of these authors were writing in the modern period of western imperialism or the post-colonial period. Their consideration of women's traditional mourning practices betrays their nostalgia for a time when Islam was pure. As we can see women have continued to engage in this behavior for over a thousand years. By calling such

[124] Ibid., 153
[125] Ibid., 152.
[126] Ibid., 154

practices innovations, it becomes clear that these scholars' concerns are rooted in what they perceive to be cultural intrusions, which cause Muslim women to deviate from the true practice of Islam. By setting out to correct these deviations, these scholars and their works emphasize the role that proper ritual behavior has to the maintenance of a unified Muslim community.

CONCLUSION

The regulation of women's mourning practices in Sunni Islam has had long history in the Muslim community. Proper mortuary practices, which include the correct expression of sorrow and grief, are powerful tools in the construction and maintenance of Islamic identity. In the early centuries after the death of Muhammad, when the Islamic empire was spreading into new lands and encountering new cultures, scholars concerned their collections of *hadith* with defining the proper ritual procedures in the event of a death. This was then used as a polemic against what were seen as the practices of a non-Muslim Other. This created clear demarcations between those who were and were not members of the Muslim community and thus became an important basis of Islamic identity.

In the modern period, with the threat of Western imperialism and cultural hegemony to the Islamic world, anxieties surrounding women's mourning ritual have been revitalized. As with the formative centuries, there is a clearly defined Other with whom the Islamic community must contend. As a result Islamic scholars are seeking to regulate women's expressions of bereavement in order to rid Islam of perceived cultural

intrusions brought on by globalization and modernization. This is achieved through the publishing and distribution of behavior manuals that reference *hadith* with messages opposing popular practices. In the next chapter, we will see how this phenomenon is playing out among Pashtun women living in Pakistan, a country with a clearly defined Muslim identity and a history of colonization.

Islamization and the Regulation of Ritual

As we have seen, Pashtun women's participation in shared mourning rituals, as part of *gham-xadi* exchanges, are a crucial instrument in the construction of personhood and ethnic identity. The perceived importance of these rituals has grown with the rise of urbanization in Pakistan. We have also seen how funerary rites and women's mourning are spaces in which Islamic identity has been negotiated vis-à-vis the other. Regulation of women's mourning was crucial during the formative period of early Islam and this debate has been recreated in the modern period as the result of perceived cultural intrusions. The chapter examines the anxieties surrounding women's bereavement that have taken a central role in the Islamist reform movements that have grown out of Pakistan's steady Islamization. It argues that these debates are the result of tensions between Pakistan's culture and changing social structure as defined by Geertz.

ISLAM AND THE PAKISTANI STATE

The nation of Pakistan was created as the result of the Indian Independence act of 1947, which was signed into law on July 18, 1947 and ended British Imperial rule in the Indian subcontinent. Pakistan officially came into being on August 14th of the same year. The partition of India was the outcome of lobbying by the All India Muslim League who feared persecution and injustice in an independent Hindu-majority state. Boarders were drawn roughly based on religious population density with Muslim majority regions becoming Pakistan and Hindu majority regions making up independent India. Pakistan, in

1947, consisted of two non-contiguous states, West Pakistan and East Pakistan, separated by Indian territory.

Pakistan, from its very inception, is intrinsically bound to Islam and Muslim identity. The idea of an independent Muslim state is generally attributed to Allama Iqbal, a Punjabi poet and philosopher. He asserted that only Islam could serve as the moral basis for a Muslim polity and the measure of Islamic nationhood. His rhetoric resonated with the Muslim intelligentsia in India as his "vision was laced with an idealized recital of the heroic Islamic past."[127] The Punjabi student Chowdhary Rahmat Ali coined the term 'Pakistan' in a 1933 pamphlet entitled "Now or Never." The name was developed as an acronym of sorts for the regions that would come to be part of the new state. Adding another layer of meaning, "pak" means pure in Urdu, thus making Pakistan a pure land for Muslims.[128]

In the years leading up to partition, Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the All India Muslim League led the charge for an independent Pakistan. The case for Pakistan was made through assertions that Muslims were not merely a minority group in India, but a separate nation onto itself. Not only were the Muslim and Hindu nations separate, they were, according to the rhetoric of the league, irreconcilable. Pakistan then was a state founded on Muslim nationalism. However, at its beginning Pakistan was to be a secular state. As Jinnah said in his presidential address to the Constituent Assembly in August 1947, "You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the

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[127] Ishtiaq Ahmed, *The Concept of an Islamic State: An Analysis of the Ideological Controversy in Pakistan* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 74.
[128] Ibid., 75-76.

business of the state." He continues, "You will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the state."[129]

The constitutions of Pakistan have provided a basis for Islamization in the countries government and legal code. Pakistan's first constitution was written nine years after partition in 1956, when composing it the role of Islam became a heavily debated topic. "Modernists" deemed that the Pakistani state should be a modern nation state while "traditionalists" argued for a traditional Islamic government.[130] The 1956 constitution provided vague provisions concerning Islam's place in the state by defining the country as the 'Islamic Republic' and requiring that the head of state must be a Muslim. The 1962 constitution stressed the importance of a progressive understanding of Islam in relation to the state through merging religious and secular ideologies.

The current constitution, drafted in 1973, was the first to be drafted by an elected assembly. It contained an article not present in the previous two, which declared Islam to be the state religion and that the Prime Minister, in addition to the President, must be a Muslim.[131] In 1985, the constitution was significantly amended by the Revival of the Constitution Order. In these changes various wordings were changed to reflect a more

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129 Muhammad Ali Jinnah, "Presidential Address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on 11th August, 1947," *Jinnaj Speeches as Governor-General of Pakistan, 1947-1948* ed. Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 2004), 17-18.

130 Rubya Mehdi, *The Islamization of the Law in Pakistan*, Surrey, (Englad: Curzon Press, 1994), 71.

131 Ibid., 97.

Islamic worldview and qualifications for membership in parliament are laid out in terms of one's adherence to Islam.[132]

While the place of Islam in Pakistan's constitution has been growing since the earliest period of the nation's history, Islamization in the modern sense began in Pakistan at the beginning in the late 1970s and continuing until the present. Though Pakistan is a country founded on an Islamic identity, Islamization in the modern sense first came about in the country through the state policies of the Pakistan People's Party in the 1970s. Government officials developed a rhetoric of Islamic equality and announced Islamic reforms that included the prohibition of alcohol and gambling as well as adopting Friday as the weekly holiday. During the 1977 elections, the party declared its commitment to

> (1) Making the teaching of the Qur'an an integral part of general education; (2) restoring to the mosque its traditional place of eminence as a centre of the community; (3) establishing a Federal Ulema Academy to educate imams and khatibs of mosques; (4) making the shrines of the venerated saints centres of Islamic learning; (5) increasing hajj facilities and (6) strengthening the Islamic Research Institute at Islamabad.[133]

However, it can be said that these Islamizing measures were largely reactive rather than based in a firm ideological vision for the country.

The military regime that followed, coming to power in 1978, was ruled by Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq until 1988 and ushered in an Islamization scheme based on an ideological commitment to creating a properly Islamic society. Leading members of this regime defined this form of Islamization as "a process of religious and social change

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[132] Ibid., 106.

[133] Riaz Hassan, "Islamization: An Analysis of Religious, Political and Social Change in Pakistan," *Middle Eastern Studies 21*, No. 3 (1985), 263-264.

which seeks to expand the role of religious institutions and the scope of religious practice in Pakistani society … through redefinition of the role of existing socio-cultural institutions and through restructuring the state bureaucracy regulating their function."[134] This reform was to be all encompassing effecting all institutions, from the education system to the economy. During this period, the regime slowly implemented structural reforms to existing legal institutions, procedural reforms that affected evidentiary procedures and reforms to the criminal law code.[135]

In the 2002 election that took place in Pakistan, Pashtuns voted overwhelmingly for the Islamist Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA). The MMA won 51 of the 101 available seats in the North West Frontier Province Assembly and 14 out of 51 seats in the Baluchistan Assembly. While successful in these regions, the won a mere eight seats of the 297 available in the Punjab Assembly. This was "the first time since the 1970s and the Afghan war that there [had] been such a political divide between Pathans and Punjabis."[136] As demonstrated by these election results, Pashtun nationalism has been deeply entrenched in Islamist principles. This is the result of Deobandi influence among Pashtun communities.

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134 Ibid., 264.

135 Charles H. Kennedy, "Islamization and Legal Reform in Pakistan, 1979-1989," *Pacific Affairs 63*, No. 1 (1990): 64.

136 Vali Nasr, "Military Rule, Islamism and Democracy in Pakistan," *Middle East Journal 58*, No. 2 (2004): 205.

ISLAMIZATION AND EDUCATION

In addition to the Islamization being enacted through government reform, Pakistani Islamist groups are pushing an agenda of reform through education institutions and publications. One such group, the Deobandis have dominated Pashtun politics and society for much of the recent past. The Deobandi movement developed out of the Islamic educational institution known as Darul Uloom in Deoband, India in 1866. Darul Uloom's curriculum was based on the teaching of the Sufi reformist Mujaddid Alf Sani. While the Deobandis eventually distanced themselves from the Sufi tradition, it was a powerful tool in attracting Pashtuns to study at Darul Uloom.[137] The Deobandis have had a powerful presence in the movement to establish an independent Pakistan and have maintained a hold in Pakistani politics and society.

In addition to the political Islamization happening in Pakistan, the value of religious education is significant. In a study conducted in 2003, Pakistanis were asked to rank their educational goals.[138] Among the options provided were basic literacy, vocational training, civic education, problem solving skills and religious education. Religious education was the goal of the overwhelming majority of respondents. Religious education was the top priority of 41 percent of those who participated in the study, 26 percent ranked religious education as the second priority. Additionally, 98 percent of respondents felt that Islamic studies should be required curriculum in all schools, the

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137 Sana Haroon, "The Rise of Deobandi Islam in the North-West Frontier Province and its Implications in Colonial India and Pakistan 1912-1996," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Series 3, 18,* No 1 (2008), 49.

138 Matthew J. Nelson, "Muslims, Markets and the Meaning of 'Good' Education in Pakistan," *Asian Survey 46*, No 5 (2006), 699-720.

majority of who felt that religious education should make up at least half of the curriculum.

An expansion of that study conducted from 2004-2005 maintained the similar findings.[139] Respondents ranked Islamic education as their main educational priority more than twice as often as any other option. While few Pakistani students are enrolled in *madrasahs*, or mosque-based schools, full-time the overwhelming majority of students attend this type of school on a part-time basis in addition to the school they attend for secular education. Notably, the religious education students in Pakistan are receiving stresses unity among Muslims and minimizes differences of belief and practice among the numerous sects in the country. The emphasis is on the 'one true Islam' and differences in the Muslim community are conceived of as "merely [betraying] the terms of a purely temporary situation in which certain individuals simply 'failed to appreciate' the terms of their own (underlying) 'equality.'"[140]

AL-HUDA INSTITUTE AND ISLAMIC IDENTITY

One important institution of Islamic learning is the al-Huda Institute that, in addition to its Pakistani campuses, opened campuses in the United States and Canada. Founded in Pakistan in 1994, al-Huda's mission is to "enlighten people with the knowledge of the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet."[141] Al-Huda offers courses on their campus as well as distance learning classes, books, CDs, videos and audio recordings. A

139 Matthew J. Nelson, "Dealing with Difference: Religious Education and the Challenge of Democracy in Pakistan," *Modern Asian Studies 43*, No. 3 (2009), 591-618.
140 Ibid., 605.
141 "Al-Huda International" al-Huda International http://www.alhudapk.com/ (accessed 3/25/12)

number of their resources are available in Urdu and English. Founded by Dr. Farhat Hashmi, al-Huda teaches women a reformist interpretation of Islam based in the scriptures.

The institute offers classes for women taught by founder Dr. Farhat Hashmi and courses for men taught by her husband Dr. Idrees Zubair. The student body consists of Pakistanis from all walks of life, varying in age, ethnicity, and social class. Approximately five percent of al-Huda's roughly 1,000 female students at the Islamabad campus are Pashtuns. In addition to the courses taught to adults, courses are offered for children ages two through twelve. The institute is advertised as non-denominational, teaching the Islam of the Qur'an and *Hadith.* The founder calls herself simply 'Muslim' without any adjective specifying sectarian division and speaks out against those who use such divisions.[142]

Many of the women Ahmed spoke with were graduates of al-Huda courses. Of al-Huda, Ahmed writes,

> The al-Huda women's movement, particularly among Pukhtun women, aims to ingrain a sense of religiosity in Pakistani society generally within the existing structures and policies of the state, and is distinct from the state –oriented Islamic political groups … yet the al-Huda Islamic women's movement should not be seen as disconnected from socio-political engagement as the form of religious piety and practice it seeks to realize entails the transformation of many public, though segregated, aspects of social life in Pakistan.[143]

The message of al-Huda is one of women's agency and importance in society; this translates to a sort of proselytizing effort wherein graduates of al-Huda are encouraged to

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[142] Ahmed, 27.
[143] Ibid., 12.

'command right and forbid wrong,' and to promote the proper adherence to Islam among their peers, as defined by al-Huda scholars. Pashtun women who adhere to ethnic traditions like *gham-xadi* "are perceived by fellow Pukhtuns from al-Huda as being in some form of opposition to Islam."[144]

The education al-Huda provides women on the sources of Islamic law provide them an authority on which to base the censuring of their less educated peers. Women are prepared through their knowledge of the Qur'an and *Hadith* literature to point out when and how Pashtun tradition is in conflict with Islamic prescription. Additionally, this knowledge allows women to circumvent the system of seniority that dominates social interactions. If a younger woman is educated in the Islamic sciences it provides her a certain social capital with which she can counter older, and thus traditionally wiser, Pashtun women.

Despite this proselytizing effort women continue in their traditional practices, which creates a conflict for those women adhering to al-Huda's Islamic principles. Ahmed describes one such encounter on the fortieth day after a funeral she attended. On this day mourners commemorate the death, a practice that conflicts with Islamic teaching's insistence that mourning last no longer than three days.[145] At this particular ceremony, female guests gathered as others performed the *khattam*, or recitation of the Qur'an. While hundreds of women had gathered only a dozen or so participated in the reading. During a break from the recitation, one Pashtun woman began to sing in Pashto

144 Ibid., 27.
145 Ibid., 92.

on religious themes. In reaction to this one woman, a student at al-Huda Institute, exited the group saying that she found the mixing of singing and the recitation of the Qur'an to be offensive ad against the teachings of Islam. At the same time, another woman complemented the woman's singing and encouraged her to sing more about faith. Ahmed reports that conflicting reactions to such situations are common among Pashtun women.

At the root of this conflict are the disparity between traditional Pashtun culture and the changing social structure of modern Pakistan. As governmental structures and laws become increasingly more Islamic and as Islamic education stresses the unity and universality of Islam, which presents deviations as degradations, adherence to Islamic principles is becoming more salient in women's lives. While Pashtun culture remains tied up in notions of tradition that stress the importance of *gham-xadi* exchanges, the community's social structure is undergoing Islamization. This creates an identity crisis that causes women to confront their conflicting identities.

CONCLUSION

Pakistan is a nation founded on a shared sense of Muslim identity. The demand for an independent Pakistan was legitimized through the unique character of the Islamic nationhood felt by South Asian Muslims. However, at its inception Pakistan was to be a secular sate. However, Islam quickly began to make inroads into the country's constitution. Politicians used Islam as a tool to win favor and to minimize sectarian differences among the people. Laws were enacted which solidified the place of Islam in the state but also in the affairs of its citizens. Beyond the growing role of Islam in the

Pakistani state, education in the country is being Islamized. This translates into an imperative to provide and obtain religious education. Another result of the Islamization of education has been an emphasis on the universality of Islam and thus the maligning of difference within the community.

Islamization had pervaded Pakistani society and has effected Pashtun women's ritual traditions and conceptions of identity. Pashtun women, like other segment of the population have sought out religious knowledge that has drawn attention to the conflict between their cultural traditions, namely the shared mourning practices required by *gham-xadi* exchanges, and Islamic teachings. Some of these women have actively sought to censure this activity among their peers while other Pashtun women continue to encourage such behavior. This has created a crisis of identity that is resulting in the necessary layering of religious and ethnic identities.

Conclusion

Identity is a process of developing one's self-conception in relation to their larger community. The performance of ritual acts is a crucial component of identity construction. Ritual binds those who share in the experience together to create a sense of communal bonding. Rites commemorating deaths are particularly important to communal identity as death weakens the community as a whole. Funerary rites bind the surviving with the dead but also reassert their place among the living. While ritual is a power force for maintaining group solidarity, it can also be a catalyst for social change. When the social fabric of meanings and symbols that is culture falls out of line with social structures, or the network of social relations, ritual becomes a space wherein this conflict is negotiated. Looking at the case of mourning rituals among Pashtun women in Pakistan, it becomes clear that this struggle is currently being played out as a result of the present historical moment.

Gham-xadi exchanges are crucial for the development and preservation of women's personal and ethnic identities. Through these performances women are provided the opportunity to develop their voice, and become full fledge member of the society. These rituals reinforce social membership as they allow women to perform their Pashtunness for the viewing and judgment of other women in the community. To not perform these acts of shared mourning is to relinquish one's Pashtunness. As Pakistani society is changing, so is the place of *gham-xadi* in Pashtun society. The economy is moving from an agrarian system to one based on industrial production and service.

Populations are rapidly moving to urban centers and away from their ancestral homelands in the rural villages. This has led to a decline in the performance of *gham-xadi* exchanges but paradoxically a rise in its perceived importance.

The practice of performative, shared mourning among women is not limited to Pashtun society or to the modern period. Throughout the Islamicate world women have practice similar rites despite prohibitions from Islamic scholars. Examining early *hadith* collections we see that in the early centuries of Islam the regulation of the mourning practiced by Muslim women was a significant device in the formation of a common Muslim identity as Islam expanded its boundaries into new territories. The Muslim community defined itself in opposition to the other communities it came into contact with at this period, who likely engaged in ritualized acts of histrionic wailing and lament. When Islamic civilization had preached its peak around the 11th century the issue of Muslim uniqueness was much less salient and thus the question of Muslim women's mourning traditions was not a pressing matter. This is seen through the absence of the topic in Islamic legal works of the day.

Yet, in the modern period when cultures have come into increasing contact as a result of imperialism and later globalization, anxieties about women's mourning has once again come to the forefront. Religious institutions have disseminated information on proper funerary procedures in an attempt to regulate women's behavior and protect Islam from perceived cultural intrusions.

This debate is being carried out with vigor among Pashtun women living in Pakistan. As Pakistan's government, legal code and educational system become

increasingly Islamized the issue of cultural difference is at stake. Islamic reform movements in the country, like al-Huda Institute, provide a vision of a single, egalitarian and unified Islam wherein differences are deviations. The Pashtun women who have graduated from the al-Huda program of study are being forced to navigate the conflict between their traditional culture and their new social structure based in Islamist notions of propriety. While culture demands participation in shared mourning with those who have suffered a loss, the Islamic teaching these women receive teaches such practices are cultural intrusions. They are not only called on to abstain but to educate others as to the impropriety of mourning rituals. This conflict creates an identity crisis in which it becomes necessary for women to compartmentalize and layer their Islamic and Pashtun identities in order to maintain both.

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